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FEATURES

Winchester's top 10 stories of 2025

NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY | STAFF WRITER

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It has been a big year for Winchester! Here are some of our favorite photos from the year: Top, clockwise, the ribbon cutting of the new downtown MBTA station (finally!), PRIDEfest, a winning WHS football team, Chinese camp, Debbie Boyle retiring and closing Ballet Arts Centre after 35 years in business, high school students at Fast Forest, the opening of Riverwalk Sculpture Park, a very rainy Town Day and the No Kings protest in October that drew more than 800 people from Winchester and surrounding communities. WINCHESTER NEWS FILE PHOTOS

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As the calendar turns from one year to the next, Winchester News looks back at 2025 to see what captured our readers' attention.

The following are the top 10 most read stories on our website for 2025:

Winchester High girls soccer senior captain Lilly Ossen (11) gets the ball under control during a regular season game against Belmont. Teammates GG Fantini (8), a junior, and Grace Bonnet (14), a sophomore, provides support as they head up field together. Ossen has since received many accolades, including the United Soccer Coaches Team MVP award. COURTESY PHOTO/GAVIN VALERIANO

1) Winchester soccer coach back on the pitch

Girls Soccer Coach Michelle Ross was back in September following her resignation before school started in August. Controversy arose after Ross selected eight freshmen for the 2025 varsity roster, an unusual move that included players from a team that won the state championship at the seventh and eighth grade level.

She resigned from her position as coach after allegations were made by parent and Select Board member Michael Bettencourt that she o some members of the varsity team to make room for younger players and

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bullied at least one player. Allegations that have since been determined to be unfounded.

After negotiations between Ross and Winchester school administrators, the beloved coach was back.

The team still managed to compile an 14-2-2 regular season record to secure another Middlesex League championship for the fourth straight year.

For the second straight year, the team also won the United Soccer Coaches Team Pinnacle Award after winning its Team Ethics Award in 2024. They were chosen for the same award this year after earning the coveted prize with just one yellow card in 20 games. It will be officially announced next year.

The Winchester girls also received the United Soccer Coaches Team Academics Award for the 2024-25 school year.

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This is a screenshot of the gate that leads to the dog's backyard after the young boy went through unannounced to get his ball back on May 12. The child was met on the path you can see through the gate by 5-

year-old Jack, the Labradoodle who bit him. COURTESY PHOTO

2) Winchester family wants neighborhood dog gone after son bitten

The Select Board was tasked with deciding if a 5-year-old Labradoodle was dangerous following a complaint the dog bit a 6-year-old boy.

The Select Board in July heard testimony from both the child's and dog's families, as well as neighbors, and town officials.

Town counsel reminded the Select Board that if the dog was found to be dangerous then state statute said the board shall order one or more of seven specific measures which span mandatory leashing, confinement, muzzling, microchipping and in the most extreme cases, euthanasia. If, however, the dog is found to be a nuisance then the board can issue unspecified remedial actions.

This first hearing on July 9 caused many residents to take sides between the boy's and the dog's families.

See number 5 for the outcome of this case, which captured the town's attention in the middle of the summer.

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Gloria's on Main Street is open, after being given the green light by the Winchester Health Department. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY

3) Winchester Health Department suspends Gloria's Pizzeria for violations

The Winchester Health Department temporarily closed down Gloria's Pizzeria following a re-inspection for previous and continuing code violations.

Gloria's owner Steven Beck attended a hearing May 30 with Health Department staff and Brian Winner, the town's counsel, to discuss the ongoing issues facing the 920 Main St. business.

The town allowed the business to re-open after it met a set of conditions laid out in a letter, including payment for outstanding violations, finding a pest control operator and provide a deep cleaning of the establis among others.

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Gloria's was shut down again Oct. 6 when once again the Health Department issued a letter to close the establishment due to ongoing violations.

The business remained closed until Nov. 19 when it re-opened after meeting the town's conditions.

In the meantime, residents were surprised to learn the business was possibly on the market for $750,000, including the furniture, fixtures and equipment.

Neither the owner nor the broker listed returned Winchester News's inquiries

Winchester High School officially graduated the Class of 2025 on June 8, 2025 at Symphony Hall in Boston. COURTESY PHOTO/WINCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL/JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY

4) Location for Winchester High School graduation uncertain

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While Winchester High School's graduation ceremony is traditionally held at Knowlton Stadium with the high school gym as a backup in case of inclement weather, school officials were at a loss as to where the Class of 2025 would actually pick up their diplomas.

A construction project to overhaul the gym that was supposed to be wrapped in time for graduation hit a snag, causing officials in February to scramble to book a venue.

In the end, Symphony Hall in Boston was picked and the 300 members of the class graduated on Sunday, June 8.

With the gym project now completed, graduation ceremonies are expected to return to Knowlton Stadium.

The Winchester Select Board in mid-July deemed a Labradoodle named Jack to be a nuisance after the dog bit a 6-year-old boy. WINCHESTER NEWS FILE PHOTO

5) Winchester Select Board deems dog a nuisance after biting young child

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On July 16, the Select Board met once again to hear more testimony about what to do with the dog named Jack, who bit a small child in May.

In the end, the board deemed the dog to be a "nuisance" and ordered the animal's family to install a fence, post signage and muzzle the dog.

The dog was also ordered to be crated if no one was home and to never be outside unattended and when off property to be leashed and with an adult.

Select Board Chair Michelle Prior also added the dog should be on a 3-foot leash when in public, be licensed and vaccinated annually, and not be allowed on the Vinson-Owen School property.

Supporters were out in force March 22 to garner last-minute votes as residents streamed into the polls. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY

6) **Newcomers win spots on Winchester Select Board, School C**

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It was the perfect Election Day — warm and sunny, with a steady stream of residents going into Winchester High School to cast their ballots. The March 22 townwide election drew only 2,933 votes, out of the town's 17,073 registered voters.

In the Select Board race, where four candidates competed for two seats, one of which was left open when John Fallon decided not to run, the winners were Paras Bhayani and incumbent Anthea Brady.

Three candidates vied for two School Committee seats. The day's winners were Stefanie Mnayarji and incumbent Karen Maruyama Bolognese.

Uncontested races included Winchester's new town moderator Philip Frattaroli, who replaced Heather von Mering.

George Nowell Jr. was seeking re-election to the Board of Assessors, Anne Marie Hill for Board of Health to replace Ruth Trimachi who chose not to run again, and David Coughlan for one of two available Library Board of Trustees seats.

Jack LeMenager won an open seat on the Planning Board being vacated by Diab Jerius, who chose not to run, after a successful write-in campaign.

Winchester residents will once again be heading to the polls on March 21, 2026, giving voters the opportunity to select officeholders for positions that guide municipal policy, oversee town departments and manage the budget.

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The town is reviewing a proposed 40B project at the intersection of Washington and Swanton streets. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY

7) Winchester officials review Washington/Swanton 40B project

In late May, town officials started the review of a proposed 40B apartment complex at the intersection of Washington and Swanton streets.

Developer Jay Melanson, of the Melanson Development Group (MDG), spoke before the Zoning Board of Appeals May 21 with a proposal for a mixed-use building with 60 rental units and commercial space, for 278-292 Washington St. and 12 and 16-20 Swanton St., the sites of abandoned commercial space.

The meeting continued with presentations on the project's amenities for residents, design, landscaping, stormwater drainage and car and pedestrian traffic, all of which will still be dealt with individually in future meetings.

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Former town manager Beth Rudolph, left, resigned in July but left Sept. 3. The town hired Stephen Delaney, center, as interim manager until a new permanent manager could be hired, but he announced he would leave by the end of 2025. The Select Board has offered Christopher Senior, right, a two-year contract with the town for the position. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTOS/NELL ESCOBAR COAKLEY & WILL DOWD

8) Winchester Town Manager Beth Rudolph tenders resignation

Town Manager Beth Rudolph submitted her resignation on July 7, setting a cap on a career that began in the Town Hall engineering office and culminated in the top administrative post.

Rudolph's departure marked the end of an era for Winchester's municipal government. She joined the town in 2004 as assistant town engineer under Bob Conway, became town engineer in 2010, then served as interim town manager before being named permanent town manager in 2021.

Her final day was Sept. 3.

The Select Board in August appointed Stephen L. Delaney as interim town manager, hoping he would be able to lead Winchester until a new permanent administrator could be hired. However, Delaney in December announced he would be leaving Winchester by the end of 2025.

Town business will be managed by Comptroller Stacie Ward, Town Clerk MaryEllen Marshall and Assistant Town Manager Mark Twogood, who was scheduled to retire Jan. 2.

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Meanwhile, the Select Board voted Dec. 22 to offer the position of town manager to Christopher Senior, following a prolonged debate over contract length and performance evaluation timelines that exposed divisions among members about the collapsed search process.

But that's another story.

The housing project planned for the intersection of Washington and Swanton streets will replace empty store fronts. The project has made some changes, including increasing units while decreasing commercial space. WINCHESTER NEWS STAFF PHOTO/NEIL ZOLOT

9) Winchester Washington-Swanton project increasing units, decreasing commercial space

Melanson Development Group (MDG) announced on Sept. 25 that it would increase the number of units in a proposed 40B apartment building at the intersection of Washington and Swanton streets from 60 to 64 units while shrinking its footprint by 2,300 square feet.

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The site, located at 278-292 Washington St. and 12 and 16-20 Swanton St., once housed commercial space, including dry cleaners and a Mexican grill.

The new configuration will have 45 one-bedroom units, up from 37; 12 two-bedroom units, down from 17, and 7 three-bedroom units, up from 6.

There will be 85 parking spaces, with one-bedroom units receiving one space and larger units, two, with commercial spaces available for use by visitors after business hours.

In December, the town received a memo from Erica Guidoboni, of Toole Design, which was hired to conduct a Transportation Impact Assessment Peer Review.

The memo detailed several recommendations for the traffic and sidewalks around the property, including that sidewalks across all project driveways will be maintained as concrete and at a level elevation for pedestrians and that easements will be given to the town for public access and signal equipment foundations outside the public right-of-way, among others.

The ZBA will continue its public hearings in 2026.

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The Oct. 10 closure of Winchester Public Schools due to a chemical leak at the high school led to an interesting conversation between Aaron Shwom and his second-grader Noah. COURTESY PHOTO/SHWOM FAMILY

10) OPINION: A Winchester second grader's take on a townwide school closure

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When Winchester's school were closed townwide on Oct. 10 following an acid spill in a storage closet at the high school on Oct. 9, Aaron Shwom contacted Winchester News following a conversation with his second-grader, Noah.

Noah had some questions — and ideas about what the town could do the next time so that schools could remain open and students could still be safe.

Check out his ideas!

So what do you think were the most important stories for Winchester in 2025? What were your favorite photos? Send us your responses and your photos at editor@winchesternews.org.

Happy New Year!

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'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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March 4, 2026

FEATURES

Celebrating Black history and culture with art, reflection, and community

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: The Winchester community came together last week at the Griffin Museum of Photography for the inaugural Black History and Culture Celebration, an evening filled with music, student creativity, and powerful messages about equity, unity, and the enduring legacy of Black

March 3, 2026

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Winchester residents share more snow photos

Well, Winchester, we made it through the weekend with only a coating of snow that

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Winchester Community Music School set to expand, upgrade

The big events in Winchest Music School always take place in Nichols

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amounted to nothing on Sunday afternoon. But during the Feb. 22-23 blizzard, Winchester News once again asked residents to send their snow photos. And here is what we received! Solmaz Amirnazmi said her daughters and

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March 2, 2026

Performance Hall. With the school and its performances' growing in popularity, the hall and many of its amenities are due for an upgrade. The performance hall is one of the main areas that the school seeks to

TAVISHI CHATTOPADHYAY | CORRESPONDENT

February 26, 2026

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EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

March 4, 2026

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

March 4, 2026

NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER

March 4, 2026

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